



2026 Census topic consultation

Closed 28 Apr 2023

Opened 27 Feb 2023

Contact

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Feedback updated 2 Aug 2023

We asked

From 28 February to 28 April 2023, the ABS opened public consultation seeking views on what changes should be made to the 2026 Census topics.

Organisations and individuals were invited to make submissions about information needs not currently collected by the ABS and to provide evidence of:

- The topic being of current national importance.
- A need for data at the national level, and either the local level or for small population groups.
- A likely continuing need for data on the topic following the Census.

You said

The ABS received 260 submissions. The submissions were received via the ABS Consultation Hub, email, mail, and meetings (where explicitly requested by the stakeholder for minutes to be included as a submission).

The ABS also considered more than 500 other pieces of feedback as part of the consultation, including recent ABS standards and classification reviews, recommendations from parliamentary inquiries, letters to the Australian Statistician, Members of Parliament and other correspondence received by the

ABS since June 2018, and 2021 Census submissions for six shortlisted topics.

Submissions and feedback were received from all levels of government, businesses, community groups, advocacy groups, industry bodies/associations, academics and individuals.

We did

- During phase one of the consultation, the ABS identified strong public value for the inclusion of 12 new topics and to make changes to 16 existing topics.
- Four existing topics have been identified for potential removal from the 2026 Census.
- The ABS has published a shortlist of the topics being considered for the 2026 Census. The publication provides a summary of the feedback received during the first phase of consultation. It outlines new topics being considered for inclusion, existing topics where change is being considered and topics being considered for removal. The publication [2026 Census topic review: Phase one directions](#) is available on the ABS website.

Where to from here?

Phase two of the 2026 Census Topic consultation is open from Thursday 27 July until Friday 8 September. This is the time to let us know if there will be impacts for you or your organisation if we changed or removed one of the shortlisted topics.

The ABS will further assess the shortlisted topics for feasibility and to determine if the Census is the most appropriate way to provide data on the topic. This will inform the decision on which topics proceed to testing.

In late 2023, the ABS will share the outcomes of phase two, including the topics recommended for removal and topics that have proceeded to testing.

In 2024, the ABS will make a recommendation to the Australian Government on the topics to be included on the 2026 Census. The final list of topics to be included in the Census will be published by the ABS in late 2025.

Published responses

[View submitted responses](#) where consent has been given to publish the response.

Overview

The ABS is undertaking a review of topics for the 2026 Census. Public consultation is undertaken to help inform our recommendation to the Australian Government on the topics that could be included in the Census.

Phase one of the consultation is open from 28 February to 28 April 2023. The ABS wants to understand what information is needed, but not currently collected by the ABS.

The ABS will assess submissions received in phase one before undertaking a second phase of public consultation in mid-2023. This will be to seek feedback on the shortlist of topics being considered for inclusion, change or exclusion in the 2026 Census.

Assessment criteria

The ABS will consider requests for new or changed topics for the Census against a set of criteria.

The first step will be assessing the public value of collecting data on the topic. To do this, we will collate the evidence provided in the submissions and then consider whether:

1. The topic is of current national importance.
2. There is a need for data at the national level, and either the local level or for small population groups.
3. There is likely to be a continuing need for data on the topic following the Census.

The ABS will further assess topics that rate strongly against the public value criteria. See the [detailed assessment criteria](#) for our considerations for each criterion.

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What happens next

This consultation has now closed.

The ABS will review submissions and shortlist topics for further consideration.

Phase two will specifically focus on potential topics for addition, change or removal.

In mid-2024 the ABS will make a recommendation to the Australian Government on the topics that could be included in the 2026 Census.

You can find further information regarding the process on the [2026 Census topic consultation](#) page.

Related

 [2026 Census topic consultation - Download version.docx](#)
103.3 KB (Office Word 2007 XML document)

 [Submission guide - 2026 Census topic consultation phase one](#)
306.8 KB (PDF document)

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